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Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), by which the Council extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report every 90 days on its implementation. The report provides an update and analysis of the conflict, the political situation and the operational environment in Darfur, including the main challenges to the effective implementation of the mandate, during the period from 15 December 2016 until 15 March 2017. It also presents the steps taken by UNAMID towards achieving its benchmarks and provides an update on the transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team, as well as the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID.

II. Conflict dynamics and the security situation

2. During the reporting period the level of armed confrontations in Darfur continued to subside, with no major fighting between the Government and rebel groups reported, including in the Jebel Marra. The Government maintained military dominance, achieved through its previous campaigns against the rebels, and signed several peace agreements with breakaway factions. Similarly, there were fewer incidents of intercommunal clashes than during the previous period, owing in part to the conclusion of the harvest season, as well as interventions by local authorities, with the support of UNAMID, to prevent further escalation and promote reconciliation. Attacks against internally displaced persons and other civilians over land, water and other livelihood issues continued, however, particularly by armed militias. Criminal groups, emboldened by the availability of weapons, also committed acts of violence against civilians and Government personnel. The overall scale of internal displacement remained unchanged. Despite improved security, conflict dynamics in Darfur reflected the volatility and unpredictability of the conditions on the ground, and the lack of tangible progress in addressing the causes and consequences of the conflict.

Fighting between the forces of the Government of the Sudan and armed movements

3. The unilateral ceasefire announced on 10 October 2016 by the President of the Sudan, Omar Hassan A. Al-Bashir, was extended for one month on 31 December,

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and for an additional six months on 15 January 2017. Similarly, the six-month ceasefire declared on 30 October 2016 by the rebel coalition, the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, remained in place.

4. There were no reports indicating clashes between the Government forces and any of the rebel groups, including the Abdul Wahid and Minni Minawi factions of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA/AW and SLA/MM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Nevertheless, tensions involving SLA/AW elements continued in Sortony, North Darfur, where civilians had fled from the previous round of fighting in the Jebel Marra. On 26 December 2016, 18 members of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) travelling in two armed vehicles attempted to enter the camp for internally displaced persons in Sortony, for unknown reasons, but left when UNAMID troops approached. On 14 January 2017, after sounds of gunshots were heard over two consecutive days in Sortony, two internally displaced persons sought medical treatment from UNAMID personnel, claiming to have been attacked by Arab militia. UNAMID was prevented from evacuating one of the wounded, who subsequently died, as the SLA/AW commander in the area, Al Sadiq Adam Abdulkarim, demanded that all UNAMID movements be ceased immediately. On 21 January, Adam Abdulkarim defected and signed a peace agreement with the Government in El Fasher, which stipulated the integration of Abdulkarim and an estimated 500 combatants into SAF. Tensions in Sortony have since increased. On 9 March, internally displaced persons threatened to expel those who had defected to the Government from the camp unless UNAMID removed them within 48 hours.

Local conflicts and intercommunal violence

5. Intercommunal violence continued to pose threats against civilians throughout Darfur. Although the current reporting period saw a reduction in the number of violent incidents over the preceding period, the level of insecurity was approximately the same as the corresponding period a year ago. A total of eight instances of local conflicts and intercommunal violence resulting in 45 fatalities were recorded over the past three months, a slight decrease from the eight clashes and 118 fatalities recorded in the previous period, and reflected the easing of tensions between farmers and herders at the end of the harvest season, as well as reconciliation efforts by the Government and UNAMID. In Central and West Darfur, Arab militias clashed with Fur and Massalit farmers, respectively, while similarly deadly rivalries erupted between Arab tribes, such as the Beni Hussein and Northern Rezeigat in North Darfur and the Ma'alia and Southern Rezeigat in East Darfur. The hostilities were related to unresolved disputes over land, livelihood and natural resources, and were exacerbated by the prevalence of weapons.

6. In Central Darfur, a series of fights between the Fur and Misseriya tribes in Mukjar, originating in an interpersonal dispute at the local market, resulted in the deaths of three Fur between 22 and 24 December 2016. Subsequently, SAF and police personnel enhanced their presence, and a peace agreement was signed on 28 January 2017. In the Um Dukhun area, following clashes between the Misseriya and Rezeigat over personal disputes, two Misseriya and one Rezeigat were killed on 25 January 2017, and on 29 January the Rezeigat community agreed to compensate the Misseriya for the loss of the member of its community.

7. In West Darfur, on 5 January 2017, the Awlad Zaid subclan of the Northern Rezeigat clashed with Massalit farmers in El Geneina over livestock disputes, and six Massalit were killed. Massalit farmers were also attacked, and 11 injured, by armed Arabs in the Arara area on 19 January, reportedly in retaliation for their involvement in the arrest of an Arab nomad by the Sudanese police. In the vicinity of Sileah, a group of Rezeigat ambushed Zaghawa tribesmen over allegations of theft on 29 January, despite an agreement on the cessation of hostilities reached in

December 2016, and two Zaghawa and two Rezeigat were reportedly killed. As the two sides continued to mobilize, joint forces of the Sudan and Chad were deployed to contain the situation.

8. Notwithstanding their 2014 peace agreement, tensions were revived between the Beni Hussein and Northern Rezeigat communities in North Darfur, particularly in El Sereif, where the former community continued to face access restrictions around the Jebel Amer gold mines, which are controlled by the latter. The relationship between the two communities also deteriorated in the village of Jemeza owing to the refusal by the Northern Rezeigat to vacate land that had been occupied by the Beni Hussein until the latter fled in 2013, following intensive intercommunal fighting over access to the gold mines. On 11 January 2017, disputes relating to cattle theft between the Beni Hussein and the Awlad Zaid clan of the Northern Rezeigat in El Sireaf led to the abduction of two Beni Hussein. The two groups reached an agreement on 18 January 2017, and on 13 February the Sudanese Minister of Mineral Resources visited the area and held discussions with both groups.

9. In East Darfur, the Southern Rezeigat and Ma'alia tribes clashed near Abu Karinka on 1 and 18 February 2017 over disputes relating to cattle theft. On 19 February, a firefight following the destruction of a Berti farm by the Agarba subclan of the Ma'alia in Al Naeir, east of Abu Karinka, resulted in the death of seven Berti. Government forces were deployed to the area, but on 20 February, members of the Berti community attacked and burned two Ma'alia villages outside Abu Karinka. In total, 17 Berti and 3 Ma'alia were reported to have been killed in the series of incidents. A UNAMID verification patrol reached Abu Karinka on 21 February, but the National Intelligence and Security Services and police personnel prevented it from proceeding further, citing the lack of prior coordination with the Government. The Security Service also delayed endorsement of another patrol, planned for 23 February, resulting in its cancellation.

10. In South Darfur, on 23 December 2016, a clash triggered by the Awlad Rashid subclan of the Ta'aisha tribe destroyed farms belonging to the Berno community in the area east of Rehade El Berdit, leaving 8 Berno and 1 Awlad Rashid dead. Government forces were deployed to the area, and the two parties signed a reconciliation agreement on 28 December 2016.

Violence against internally displaced persons

11. During the reporting period, internally displaced persons were targeted in 249 incidents, leading to 31 fatalities, most of which were perpetrated by Government forces, including the border guards and the Rapid Support Forces. They faced various forms of violence, including attacks against their camps, sexual and gender-based violence and criminal incidents. Locations with the highest number of such incidents included the areas of Kutum, Sortony, and Tawilla in North Darfur, Zalingei and Nertiti in Central Darfur, Kalma and Otash in South Darfur, and El Geneina and Kereinik in West Darfur.

12. In Central Darfur, on 17 December 2016, four armed men entered the Khamsadagaig camp for internally displaced persons near Zalingei and fired sporadic shots into the air. On 27 December, the Ereigat subclan of the Northern Rezeigat entered the North camp for internally displaced persons, near Nertiti, and threatened the Fur who were living there, accusing them of cattle theft. Following this event, SAF deployed to the area, but a similar incident took place on the same day in the Straha camp, also in the vicinity of Nertiti, where approximately 150 armed Arab nomads entered the camp in search of cattle and intimidated its residents. On 1 January 2017, SAF and police personnel who entered and opened fire in the Ghabat East and Straha camps, reportedly searching for suspects involved

in the killing of an SAF soldier on 31 December, killed two internally displaced persons in the Ghabat East camp. The Deputy Governor of Central Darfur visited Nertiti to address the matter, but on 2 January 2017, local residents reported that SAF soldiers entered the North camp once again and robbed two internally displaced persons from the Fur community.

13. In North Darfur, on 18 December 2016, Arab nomads assaulted a UNAMID truck driver belonging to the Fur tribe at a water point in Kube near the Sortony camp for internally displaced persons. They subsequently warned Fur from the camp that they should not collect water in Kube. On 2 February 2017, armed Arabs stole animals from internally displaced persons and ambushed Government forces near Tawilla, which resulted in the killing of four officers. In South Darfur, on 17 January, a resident of the Kalma camp for internally displaced person was killed and another was injured while tracking the assailants. The following day, a UNAMID patrol took the wounded man to a police station, where they were surrounded by armed Arabs who fired shots in the air. In response, SAF and police personnel were dispatched to the area. Random night shooting was also reported in the Ardamata, Abu Zar, and Riyadh camps in West Darfur, and the El Neem camp in East Darfur.

Crime and banditry

14. A total of 673 criminal incidents and 106 fatalities were recorded between 15 December 2016 and 15 March 2017, compared with 659 incidents and 122 fatalities during the previous reporting period. Incidents included assault/harassment (181 cases), shooting (138 cases), murder (84 cases), armed robbery (57cases), burglary/break-ins (47 cases), livestock theft (42 cases), abduction (44 cases), attempted robbery (16 cases), threats of violence (18 cases), attack/ambush (18 cases), looting (7 cases), arson (7 cases) and other incidents (10 cases).

15. On a number of occasions, criminal incidents involved armed militias attacking Government personnel on duty. In Central Darfur, on 26 December 2016, a group of Arab men assaulted a convoy of the Central Reserve Police in the Shawa area, east of Zalingei, injuring four police officers. On the following day, Arab men reportedly attacked an SAF convoy in Jebel Ahmer, west of Zalingei, killing one soldier. On 6 March 2017, heavy shooting erupted when Government forces prevented a group of border guards from entering Zalingei to protest delays in salary payment. During the violence, one member of the Arab militia was killed and three stray bullets hit UNAMID facilities, however, there were no injuries to peacekeepers. In North Darfur, two SAF soldiers were wounded in an exchange of fire with armed robbers at the Tine market on 9 January. On 2 February a search operation carried out by members of the police and the Popular Defence Forces for a group of armed Arabs who had attacked two Fur internally displaced persons from the old Rwanda camp the day before came under attack by an unidentified group, as a result of which two Sudanese police officers and two members of the Popular Defence Forces were killed. In East Darfur, on 31 December, a Sudanese police officer was seriously injured when armed men attacked and killed an ambulance driver in the vicinity of Sireish village. In West Darfur, a Sudanese police officer was shot in Masteri town on 3 January 2017, and subsequently died. The perpetrators sized his weapons and fled.

III. Political developments

Darfur peace process

16. On 20 December 2016, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, represented by former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Abdulsalami Abubakar, met with President Al-Bashir and discussed, among other items, the Darfur peace process. President Al-Bashir reiterated the position of the Government that further talks with non-signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur would be aimed at negotiating an additional protocol to the agreement. Subsequently, the non-signatories held two consultations on the way forward. Following a meeting with President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in Kampala on 24 December 2016, representatives of SLA/MM and JEM/Gibril Ibrahim issued a joint statement emphasizing that the implementation of the road map agreement signed between the Government and the opposition coalition, the "Sudan Call", in October 2016 was a prerequisite for the reactivation of the peace process. The Sudan Call held its leadership council meeting in Paris from 16 to 20 January 2017, after which it stated the revitalization of the road map agreement would require a redesigning of the entire peace process, referring to emerging political developments.

17. Meanwhile, negotiations held under the auspices of the President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno, between the Sudanese authorities and a breakaway group of SLA/AW called SLA/Second Revolution, culminated in their signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur on 23 January 2017.

National Dialogue process

18. In line with the recommendations of the National Dialogue, the National Assembly endorsed amendments to the constitution on 26 December 2016, which included: the creation of a Government of National Reconciliation with a four-year mandate; a post of Prime Minister within the framework of the presidential system; modifications to the composition of the National Assembly and state legislative councils; and the separation of the posts of Attorney General and Minister of Justice. The opposition parties, referring to numerous arrests made since November 2016 in connection with the protests against subsidy cuts, demanded that constitutional amendments also include guarantees for political freedom. The leaders of the seven opposition parties that had participated in the National Dialogue process met with the Dialogue Implementation Committee on 28 December 2016, and proposals for additional constitutional amendments were submitted to the National Assembly on 18 January 2017. Those proposals are currently under review by a parliamentary committee established to study them. On 1 March 2017, President Al-Bashir appointed the First Vice-President, Lieutenant Colonel Barki Hasan Saleh, to the post of Prime Minister. He was sworn in on the following day, while maintaining his post as First Vice-President. In his new role, Prime Minister Saleh will oversee the implementation of the outcome of the National Dialogue, including the formation of a Government of National Reconciliation following the dissolution of the current Government on 2 March 2017. The reaction of the opposition parties was muted, with some preferring the status quo rather than transformation.

19. Invoking the recommendations of the National Dialogue, on 8 January 2017, the Government also submitted a bill before the National Assembly to shift the command of the Rapid Support Forces from the National Intelligence and Security Service to SAF. On 9 January, a group of Arabs threatened to attack Zalingei in Central Darfur if their demands for the enrolment into SAF were not satisfied. On 16 January, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the Rapid Support Forces Act, providing that the Rapid Support Forces would belong to the Ministry of

Defense and operate under the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief of SAF. The opposition parties have criticized the decision as contrary to the spirit of the National Dialogue, which seeks accountability in governance.

20. Following the civil disobedience campaigns launched in November 2016 to protest subsidy cuts in fuel and electricity, another call on the pubic to stay at home was made on 19 December. In Darfur, although schools and Government offices remained open, UNAMID observed that approximately 30 to 50 per cent of shops closed in most state capitals, except in East Darfur, and that fewer vehicles and pedestrians were in evidence. UNAMID also noted an increased presence of security personnel in key areas of cities. On 20 December, the National Intelligence and Security Service seized all copies of *Al Tayyar, Al-Saiha, Al Ayam and Al-Ahram Al-Youm* daily newspapers, allegedly for having published articles supporting the call for civil disobedience.

21. On 13 January 2017, the outgoing President of the United States of America signed an executive order for the revocation of Sudan-related sanctions for a period of 180 days, although interaction with individuals associated with the conflict in Darfur was still prohibited. President Al-Bashir welcomed the step, while the reactions of the Sudanese opposition groups were varied, with the National Umma Party, the National Congress Party and SLA/MM and SLA/AW criticizing the decision as inconsistent with the lack of progress on the ground, while representatives of JEM made positive remarks.

22. On 26 January 2017, the Chair of the National Umma Party and the former Prime Minister, Imam Al Sadiq al-Mahdi, returned to the Sudan after two years of exile in Egypt, where he had sought refuge after being accused by the Government of conspiring with armed rebels in 2014.

23. On 8 March 2017, following the release of 125 Sudanese prisoners of war by the Sudan Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North), facilitated by the President of Uganda, President Al-Bashir issued a decree granting a pardon to 259 combatants captured during previous clashes, which included the commuting of death sentences against 66 members of the Gibril Ibrahim faction of JEM (JEM/Gibril) and the SLA/MM. The President also granted a general amnesty to 181 JEM/Gibril combatants and 12 members of SLM/AW and SLA/MM factions involved in battles with the Government forces in 2015.

IV. Humanitarian situation

24. No new displacement has been reported thus far in 2017. Of 97,400 people who were newly displaced in 2016, approximately 39,600 people have reportedly returned, including some 25,500 who were verified and assisted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Golo, Central Darfur. An additional roughly 99,400 people who were also reportedly displaced during 2016 remained unverified, due to access constraints in some locations.

25. Humanitarian agencies distributed food and provided emergency shelter and non-food items, as well as nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene support in Golo, following the joint mission by the Government and the United Nations country team to the Jebel Marra from 8 to 13 December 2016. While internally displaced persons received basic humanitarian assistance, gaps were identified in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene, protection and livelihoods.

V. Operating environment

Attacks and restrictions of movement on and denials of access to the mission

26. During the reporting period, the level of security incidents affecting United Nations personnel and property increased modestly over the previous period, with 50 criminal incidents reported (in comparison to 32 in the previous period) in cases of: arrest/detention (2 cases), threat (1 case), assault/injury (2 cases), trespassing (8 cases), theft (8 cases), theft attempts (5 cases), harassment/intimidation (2 cases), carjacking (1 case) damage/stone throwing (19 cases), and damage to United Nations property (2 cases).

27. Several incidents involved locally recruited personnel of UNAMID. On 28 and 29 December 2016, a total of four UNAMID national staff members were arrested by the National Intelligence and Security Services in El Fasher, accused of illegally exchanging currency, but were subsequently released. On 6 January 2017, unidentified armed men assaulted and injured a UNAMID national staff member at the Alardeeba market, west of El Geneina. UNAMID has not been granted access to a national staff member arrested on 23 November 2016 by the National Intelligence and Security Services in Nyala, South Darfur, for an alleged security violation. The staff member remains in Government custody as of 15 March.

28. The freedom of movement of UNAMID continued to be hindered by the Government. As of 15 March 2017, UNAMID ground patrols had been denied access in 13 cases and their movements had been restricted in 4 cases, compared to the 67 restrictions imposed by the Government and internally displaced young people during the previous reporting period. The cases of denied access included repeated movement restrictions in Abu Karinka and Um Kadada, in North Darfur, and Buram, South Darfur, and interruptions of patrols to camps for internally displaced persons, including the Neem camp in East Darfur, the Rwanda and Dabaneira camps in North Darfur, and the Kass camp in South Darfur. On 14 March, SAF threatened to shoot down a UNAMID helicopter on its way from Nyala, South Darfur, to El Daein, East Darfur, for allegedly flying over its camp.

29. With regard to air movements, UNAMID planned 2,755 sorties from 16 December 2016 to 15 March 2017, of which 11 were denied by the authorities, compared to 51 denied sorties during the previous reporting period. Despite the decrease in flight cancellations as a result of improved coordination between the Government and UNAMID, bureaucratic impediments continued to challenge the mobility of the Mission. Direct flights between team sites located in different sectors were not allowed, and hours of air operations continued to be limited by the Sudanese civil aviation authorities.

Attacks and access denials and restrictions imposed on humanitarian actors

30. On 17 January 2016, SLA/AW elements detained three local staff members subcontracted by an international aid organization and seized their vehicle at a construction site near Sortony, North Darfur, accusing them of being in possession of a firearm. The subcontractors were released several hours later, following negotiations led by UNAMID.

31. On 25 December 2016, the Humanitarian Aid Commission revised the directives and procedures for humanitarian action in the Sudan, which significantly eased the regulations for the delivery of humanitarian aid. This included revised travel procedures, whereby travel permits would be required only to localities in the Jebel Marra, certain locations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states and border areas. The Sudanese authorities were still in the process of putting the new

directives into effect during the reporting period, and some delays and restrictions on travel requests continued to be recorded. However, there was a significant improvement in freedom of movement, particularly in processing travel documents.

32. As examples of improved access, an inter-agency mission to Al Lait, North Darfur, which had been pending since July 2016, was completed on 16 February 2017. Similarly, two inter-agency needs assessment missions for Belle Elserief and Deribat, in South Darfur, were approved by the authorities. The assessment to Belle Elserief was completed on 21 February, to be followed by a mission to Deribat once security conditions have improved.

Visas and customs clearances

33. The Government granted 439 visas for UNAMID, comprising 183 for military and police personnel; 170 for contractors; and 13 for international staff. As of 15 March 2017, 292 visa requests submitted since January 2016 remained pending, 47 of which were for international civilian staff. The vacancy rate for international civilian staff decreased from the last reporting period in some sections, namely human rights (from 46 to 43 per cent) and communications and public information (from 12 to 6 per cent).

34. While all pending food ration containers have been released from Port Sudan, customs clearance for 182 shipments of equipment owned by contingents of UNAMID and the United Nations remained held at Port Sudan and in Khartoum. A request for the clearance of equipment belonging to the military utility helicopter unit from China, submitted on 10 October 2016, has not been cleared by the customs authorities, while the ship carrying it has been docked at Port Sudan since 6 November 2016, accruing demurrage charges. Other shipments awaiting clearance, some for almost a year, contained communications facilities, vehicles and waste management systems. Additionally, the Government has not granted the certificate of exemption from taxation for goods imported by sea in 2016, which also compounded delays in the release of shipments from ports.

35. On 19 January 2017, at the airport at El Fasher, a number of additional firearms and ammunition equipment was found in the bulk luggage of an Indonesian formed police unit of UNAMID scheduled to depart the Sudan two days later. The discovered weapons were not part of the contingent-owned equipment list and were confiscated by the Sudanese authorities. An internal United Nations investigation was launched immediately to identify the source of the weapons, while the Government of Indonesia also dispatched personnel to follow up on the incident. The Government of the Sudan has also opened its own investigation into the incident. The findings of the investigation will be compiled shortly.

VI. Mandate implementation

A. Support for inclusive peace process

High-level mediation

36. The Acting Joint Special Representative continued to engage the non-signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur regarding the resumption of talks with the Government. In a letter dated 5 February 2017, the Acting Joint Special Representative conveyed to the non-signatories the outcome of the meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar and the Envoy of the President of the Sudan concerning the negotiation and diplomatic communication on Darfur held in Doha on 11 December 2016. During the meeting, the Qatari and Sudanese officials

reaffirmed that it was important for the Government and the non-signatories to sign an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, and that further talks would be aimed at negotiating an additional protocol to the Doha Document. The non-signatories acknowledged receipt of the letter, in which they were asked to submit their proposals for the issues raised in the Doha Document, but they have not yet provided a response.

37. The Acting Joint Special Representative also held a series of discussions with various interlocutors, including briefings to the members of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar on the status of consultations with the non-signatories, in order to ensure coordination and complimentarity with UNAMID efforts to support the peace process.

Implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

38. On 6 January 2017, President Al-Bashir issued two decrees, one appointing Amin Hassan Omer as the Envoy of the President for the negotiation and diplomatic communication on Darfur, and the other appointing Magdi Khlafalla as Head of the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office, an entity that assumed responsibility for the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur after the closure of the Darfur Regional Authority in September 2016. On 17 January, President Al-Bashir issued another decree appointing heads of the remaining bodies for the implementation of the Doha Document, namely the Darfur Land Commission, the Voluntary Return and Resettlement Commission, the Justice, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Darfur Security Arrangements Implementation Commission and the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund, which would report through the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office to the Minister and the Presidency. UNAMID continued to engage national and local interlocutors, including the new head of the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office, seeking modalities to support the successor bodies in addressing the outstanding issues of Doha Document. On 6 March, the 12th meeting of the Implementation Follow-up Commission for the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur was convened in Khartoum, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Qatar, to discuss the progress and challenges in the implementation of the Doha Document since its last meeting, held in Khartoum on 9 May 2016.

39. On 19 December 2016, in El Daein, East Darfur, UNAMID concluded the demobilization of 750 ex-combatants, in collaboration with the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. The demobilization exercise involved 134 ex-combatants from the JEM/Peace Wing, 222 from SLA/Mustapha Terab, 201 from SLA/Free Will and 193 from SLA/Peace Wing. UNAMID provided technical and logistical support, as well as the payment of transition safety allowances, and WFP delivered three-month's worth of dry rations. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission provided briefings on reintegration options; however, funding gaps have delayed the provision of reintegration assistance for 2,000 of the 5,738 ex-combatants who have been demobilized since 2014.

40. The third phase of the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation started on 17 January 2017, and as at 15 March 2017, 16 of the 26 locality consultations were carried out in West, North, South and Central Darfur, including in Zalingei and Golo. Approximately 150 local interlocutors participated in each event, except in Beida, West Darfur, where representatives of the Misseriya community were absent. The consultation was yet to commence in East Darfur owing to a delay in financial reporting for the previous phase. Prior to the commencement of the exercise, UNAMID and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a

preparatory workshop from 18 to 21 December 2016 for participants from the Dialogue Implementation Committee to improve their financial accounting.

B. Protection of civilians

41. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID continued to focus its activities on protecting internally displaced persons and addressing intercommunal violence. In addition to implementing the strategy on intercommunal violence developed in 2016, UNAMID completed a review of its strategy on the protection of civilians on 21 February 2017, refining its approach by strengthening coordination throughout the Operation, providing greater clarity on roles and responsibilities of each component and enhancing training, communication and messaging on protection.

Provision of physical protection

42. On the basis of the mapping of the protection situation conducted during the last reporting period, UNAMID increased patrols in priority areas, including Shangil Tobaya, Sortony, Kabkabiya, Tawilla, Korma and Kutum in North Darfur, Nertiti and Mukjar in Central Darfur, Kalma and Greida in South Darfur and El Geneina, in West Darfur. In Sortony, North Darfur, UNAMID continued to provide around-the-clock patrols to deter attacks against the camp for internally displaced persons. From 29 to 31 January 2017, the Deputy Joint Special Representative (Protection) led an integrated team comprised of UNAMID and humanitarian personnel to Sortony, and engaged with a range of interlocutors, including nomad militia leaders, to discuss the cessation of violence, ways to ease tensions around the water point in Kube and the continued blockage of the road between Sortony and Kabkabiya.

43. In Central Darfur, UNAMID received clearance to visit parts of the Jebel Marra that had remained inaccessible since the resumption of fighting in 2014, including Koron, Sorong, Woodi and Wadi Boori around Golo, although access to Kutrum and Boldon was not approved on the pretext of concern for the security of UNAMID personnel. From 21 to 24 January 2017, UNAMID dispatched a reconnaissance mission, and while a road to Woodi and Wadi Boori proved impassable, the team reached Golo, Koron and Sorong, and observed Sarong to be largely abandoned and a number of houses in Koron destroyed. From 12 to 13 February, an assessment mission comprised of UNAMID and humanitarian personnel visited Golo, Koron, Sorong and Boori. Residents in Koron and Sorong reported the burning of their houses and farms, the establishment of numerous checkpoints to control their movements, as well as sexual abuse of women by Government forces.

44. From 15 December 2016 to 15 March 2017, UNAMID conducted a total of 25,326 military patrols, including 10,759 short-range patrols, 571 long-range patrols, and 3,058 night patrols, covering the total of 7,408 villages and 3,487 camps for internally displaced persons. In addition, the police personnel of UNAMID undertook 8,720 patrols, including 4,416 confidence-building patrols to camps for internally displaced persons and 4,304 patrols to respond to the security needs, particularly of women and children engaged in livelihood activities. As part of crime prevention initiatives in camps for internally displaced persons, 626 joint patrols involving 1,284 community policing volunteers were also conducted during the reporting period.

Logistical and security support to humanitarian operations

45. As at 15 March 2017, UNAMID had provided 420 round-trip escorts for United Nations and civil society humanitarian partners, in support of their delivery and the monitoring of humanitarian assistance and assessment missions. The occasions for these escorts included an assessment mission by the European Commission to South Darfur, humanitarian missions led by the United Nations Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance to the Otash camp for internally displaced persons in South Darfur and to Tamar Bol and Jamil in Central Darfur.

Promoting a protective environment

46. UNAMID continued to monitor, report on and advocate the prevention of human rights violations and abuses, conflict-related sexual violence, sexual and gender-based violence and violations against children. UNAMID also provided technical support to strengthen the capacity of penal and judicial institutions and to reduce the risk posed to civilians by explosive remnants of war.

47. UNAMID documented 181 new cases of human rights violations and abuses involving 400 victims, including 31 children, during the reporting period, compared to 106 cases involving 214 victims during the previous reporting period. Violations of the right to life accounted for 46 cases involving 99 victims, including one child, and violations of the right to physical integrity accounted for 62 cases involving 167 victims, including two children. There were 44 cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, in the form of rape and attempted rape involving 67 victims, including 23 children, and 15 cases of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention involving 42 victims. There were 14 abduction cases involving 25 victims. UNAMID confirmed 144 cases of human rights violations and abuses involving 298 victims, however, the remaining 37 cases involving 102 victims could not be verified, due to various access restrictions, including those imposed by the Government. Of the 181 reported cases, 41 cases involving 132 victims were reportedly perpetrated by Government security forces and associated groups. The remaining 140 cases, involving 268 victims, were allegedly perpetrated by unidentified armed men, some described by the victims as being Arabs.

48. As part of advocacy efforts, UNAMID raised the issue of arbitrary arrests and detentions affecting civilians at a meeting with the National Intelligence and Security Services on 8 January 2016, and expressed its concern about the continued denial of family visitation rights to detainees.

49. To increase the awareness and capacity of Government security personnel on issues relating to the protection of civilians, UNAMID conducted four training courses on human rights and basic criminal investigation for 143 male and 5 female police officers. To prevent crimes at the local level, 11 training courses on community policing, human rights, sexual exploitation and abuse and road safety awareness were provided to 429 internally displaced persons and community policing volunteers. UNAMID also commenced the implementation of 5 community stabilization projects in South Darfur, aimed at strengthening rule of law, education and livelihood skills for youth.

50. Initiatives to improve the effectiveness of penal and judicial institutions included 438 visits to police stations and detention facilities to monitor the conditions of accused persons, including children living with their incarcerated mothers, as well as sexual and gender-based violence in those facilities. In El Daein prison, East Darfur, UNAMID discovered that 374 inmates and 21 children, many of them South Sudanese refugees detained for alcohol-related offences, were held in a

facility with provisions meant for 95 persons. UNAMID secured the release of 11 female inmates and two children, and continued to advocate for the release of inmates in pro-longed and arbitrary detention. In addition, following advocacy from UNAMID, seven new magistrates were deployed to Kass, Buram, Tulus, Ed El Fursan and Nyala in South Darfur, and an additional two magistrates were deployed to El Daein, East Darfur, in January 2017, enhancing the efficiency and quality of trial processes.

51. UNAMID intensified its efforts to strengthen local capacity for protection in the event of the return or resettlement of internally displaced persons. Engagement with the police was accelerated in this context, and on 14 February 2017 a police training centre in El Fasher, established with support from UNAMID, was inaugurated and handed over to the Sudanese authorities. On 15 February, the first meeting of the police development coordination committee, comprising representatives from the Government, UNAMID and the United Nations country team, took place in El Fasher to further discuss capacity-development issues for the police.

52. Furthermore, with a view to supporting the re-establishment of the criminal justice chain in potential return areas, UNAMID undertook an assessment on the rule of law in the localities to which internally displaced persons were likely to return, including Kabkabiya, Mellit and Kutum in North Darfur, Habila, Mournei and Beida in West Darfur, and Shattaya in South Darfur. In Kutum, on 7 February 2017, UNAMID, together with UNDP and the Government, supported the rehabilitation and the reopening of a prison that had been closed since 2012. At the policy level, UNAMID supported a workshop from 22 to 23 February 2017 for 88 participants from the Ministry of Interior and academic institutions to finalize the standard operating procedures, strategic training framework and curricula and guidance manual for inspection and audit to be adopted at the national-level prison development committee meeting in March.

53. UNAMID also continued to raise awareness of child rights and child protection. It provided training to 406 female and 327 male beneficiaries, inclusive of 154 military personnel, 69 police personnel and 511 participants from civil society, camps for internally displaced persons and local child protection committees in North, South, Central and West Darfur. UNAMID continued to engage the Government and rebel groups on ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and on 25 January 2017, JEM reissued its command order to prohibit its members from recruiting and using child soldiers and prohibiting other grave violations.

54. Explosive ordnance continued to pose a threat in Darfur, with three incidents reported during the period under review, resulting in severe injury to five individuals. UNAMID deployed disposal teams across Darfur, with particular focus on areas where newly displaced persons were sheltered. Assessments on general explosive hazards were conducted in 22 villages, including 10 in North Darfur, 6 in South Darfur and 4 in West Darfur, as a result of which 1,187 items of unexploded ordnance and 11,474 small arms ammunition were located and destroyed. Between 15 December 2016 and 15 March 2017, UNAMID also conducted 865 education sessions on the risks connected to explosive remnants of war, particularly in areas with high number of internally displaced persons or reported accidents, benefitting 76,414 participants composed of 13,177 men, 9,368 women, 29,794 boys and 24,075 girls.

C. Local conflict mediation

55. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016), UNAMID continued to implement the mission-wide strategy to prevent intercommunal violence, address existing conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence, engaging various stakeholders, including state governments, native administration and security agencies.

56. UNAMID conducted 10 dialogue forums for farmers and herders in Korma and Um Salaya in North Darfur, and the villages of Ashamara, Chakam Chakam, Habila and Nouri in Mournei, Kafaot and Um Sebeka in West Darfur. The participants, noting the increasing competition for water and pasture in fertile areas, the blocking of migratory routes and the absence of Government authority in some conflict-prone areas, recommended the establishment of water points along migratory routes, the rehabilitation of villages and the provision of basic services.

57. UNAMID also continued with mediation efforts to prevent or mitigate intercommunal conflict. On 19 January 2017, UNAMID conducted an integrated field mission visit to El Sereif, North Darfur, to discuss outstanding disagreements between the Beni Hussein and Northern Rezeigat over the Jebel Amer gold mines, water use, recurrent fighting between farmers and herders and other acts of criminality, including possible solutions to defuse the escalating tensions between the two groups. The mission was followed by a two-day peace conference from 13 to 14 March 2017 to address these issues. Following the fighting between Fur and Misseriya in Mukjar, Central Darfur, in December, UNAMID supported the efforts of a joint mediation committee with both communities, which facilitated a peace agreement between the two parties. Similarly, both prior to and after the signing of the peace agreement between the Massalit and Rezeigat in Graida, South Darfur, on 3 February 2017, UNAMID engaged with the state authorities and community representatives on the necessary steps for the conclusion and implementation of the agreement.

VII. Transfer of mandated tasks to the United Nations country team and exit strategy

A. Transfer of mandated tasks and cooperation with the United Nations country team

58. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 2228 (2015) and 2296 (2016), UNAMID continued efforts regarding the gradual transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team on the basis of comparative advantage and complementarity. On 24 January 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed to implement the transfer of tasks relating to legal aid from UNAMID to UNDP, in line with the United Nations joint rule of law programme for Darfur. In the area of gender, UNAMID, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Fund for Populations Activities (UNFPA), UNDP and the Office of the Resident Coordinator continued to convene monthly forums to plan for the transfer of tasks, including a donor conference to support the implementation of transitioned tasks. The limited presence, capacity and resources of the United Nations country team remained a serious obstacle to the further transfer of tasks.

B. Exit strategy

59. Further to Security Council resolution 2296 (2016) and the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of 13 June 2016, the United Nations and the African Union continued discussions with the Government on the implementation of the benchmarks of UNAMID as the basis of its exit strategy within the framework of the joint working group. The group met in Khartoum on 26 February 2017 to finalize the report drafted during its previous sessions, held in October and November 2016. The report, which acknowledged the positive developments that had been achieved, as well as locations where further progress was required in relation to the political, security, humanitarian and the rule of law areas, called for progress in the transfer of tasks by June 2017. It also stated that certain locations could be considered as suitable for handing over to the Government and the United Nations country team to facilitate the Mission's phased and gradual withdrawal.

60. In accordance with the Secretary-General's letter of 28 October 2016 (S/2016/915), an integrated team, comprising representatives from the United Nations and the African Union with expertise in political, military, police, security, humanitarian, development, human rights, gender and support issues, arrived in Khartoum on 5 March 2017 to commence the strategic review. The team considered, inter alia, opportunities for the right-sizing of UNAMID. The joint African Union-United Nations report on the strategic review will be submitted to the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council by early May 2017.

VIII. Financial aspects

61. The General Assembly, by its resolution 70/284, appropriated the amount of $1,039.6 million for the maintenance of UNAMID for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

62. As at 23 February 2017, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to $100.1 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,837.6 million.

63. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 October 2016, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 30 September 2016, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

IX. Observations

64. The situation in Darfur has evolved. The Government and rebel groups are no longer engaged in active combat, and the presence of the rebel groups has diminished, except in the area of the Jebel Marra. Consequently, the security and humanitarian situations have improved in most of Darfur. Nevertheless, internally displaced persons still face violent attacks that preclude their safe, voluntary and dignified return. Such attacks are perpetrated by Government forces, armed militias or criminal elements, both inside their camps and when they step out to engage in life-sustaining activities, such as farming or water collection. Women and children remain particularly vulnerable, and crimes against them continue to occur daily. Lands, farms and properties that they once called home have been occupied by others, and armed clashes over these resources continue to claim the lives of the people in Darfur.

65. The current lull in armed conflict must be sustained, so that violence against civilians ceases, and conditions emerge for the voluntary and safe return of internally displaced persons and communities, so that they can embark on a sustainable path to reconciliation and recovery. I welcome the continuation of unilateral ceasefires by the Government of the Sudan and the non-signatory movements to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and I urge them to resume direct talks with a view to achieving a formal agreement on the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access and to move expeditiously towards political negotiations. These steps will create confidence, internally and externally, that the conflict in Darfur may end through an uncontested, inclusive and participatory process. I once again call on the leadership of SLA/Abdul Wahid faction to demonstrate its commitment towards the peaceful solution of the conflict by joining the talks without preconditions or further delay. I call on the two SLA/Abdul Wahid groups who signed separate agreements with the Government to abide by their terms, cease any armed activities and ensure that peace dividends are extended to all. Otherwise, it is the people of Darfur who will continue to suffer.

66. While intercommunal rivalry may predate the outbreak of the rebellion and counter-insurgency operation in 2003, its ferocity as a result of the armed conflict continues to plague Darfur today. The proliferation of heavy weapons and small arms, the mobilization of tribes for fighting and the erosion of social cohesion and authority at the community level during the 14 years of the conflict has magnified the level of violence over access to livelihood sources. Internal displacement caused by the conflict has also complicated local dynamics, as in the case of Sortony, North Darfur. Notwithstanding the efforts made by local governments to promote reconciliation, the recurrence of intercommunal clashes cannot be resolved in the absence of an inclusive peace process and its conclusion, which involves consensus on equitable access to and sustainable management of land and other natural resources, the rule of law and the disbanding of armed militias. I call on the Government and all stakeholders to cooperate with UNAMID and the United Nations country team in continuing to work towards the prevention and mitigation of intercommunal conflict, taking specific measures to address its root causes, which will ultimately benefit members of all communities in Darfur as they seek to return to peace.

67. The National Dialogue process provided a platform for the Sudan to identify remedies to its internal political challenges. I call on the Government and the opposition parties to continue working together to implement its recommendations in a way that ensures the ownership of the process and its outcome by the wider public, including civil society groups. The reciprocal decisions made by the Government and the SPLM-North to release their respective prisoners of war were a positive development that can foster a conducive environment for dialogue, and I look forward to the resumption of talks facilitated by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel.

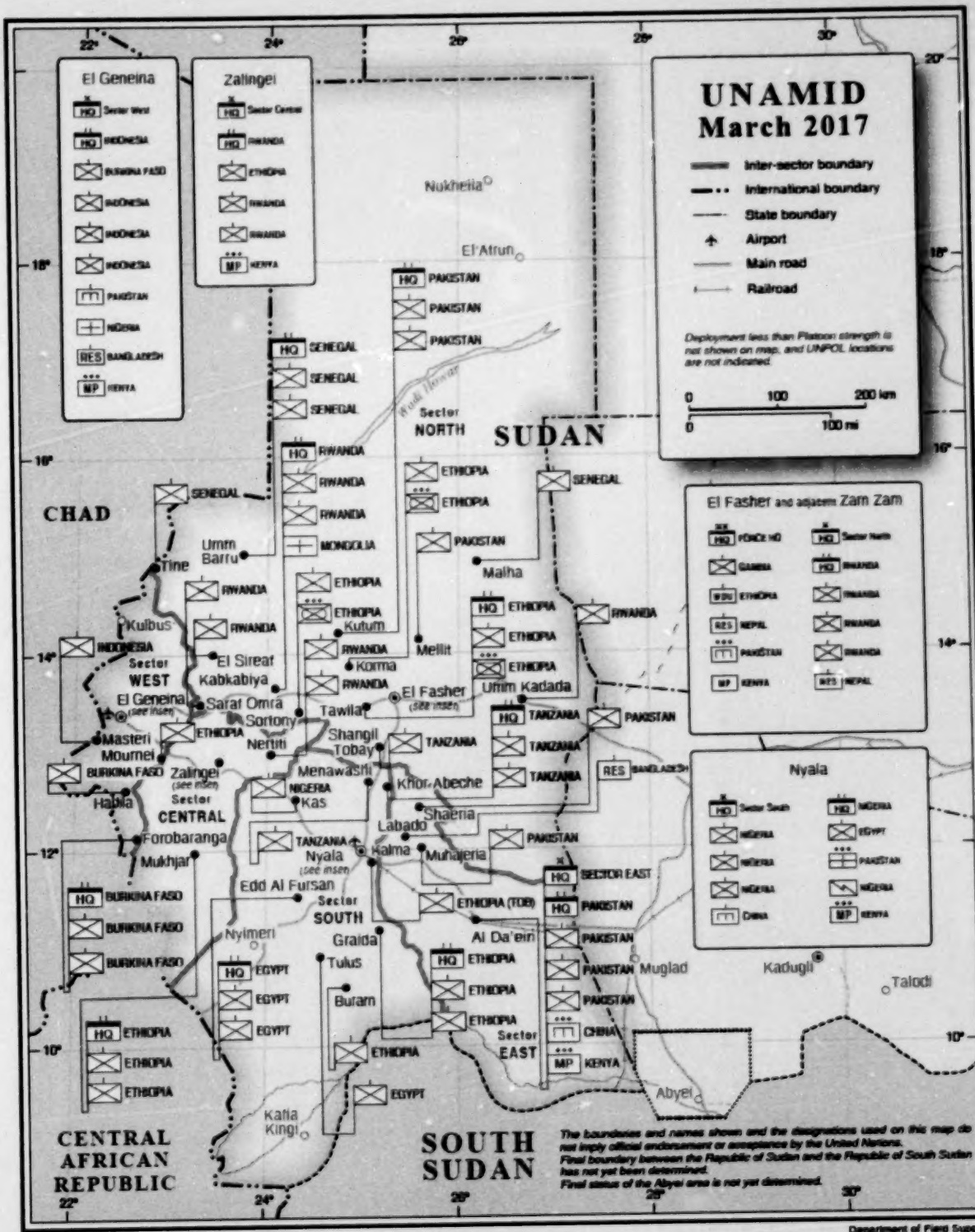
68. The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur articulated ways to address the causes and consequences of the conflict, including critical issues relating to land, the disarmament of militias, reconciliation and accountability and the return of internally displaced persons. In this regard, I note with encouragement the establishment of new arrangements under the Presidency for taking forward the implementation of outstanding issues of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. It will be important, in order to ensure the completion of the remaining tasks, that concrete plans are developed and executed in a timely and inclusive manner with the participation of the people of Darfur. UNAMID remains committed to support such efforts, together with the United Nations country team.

69. With over 2.6 million people still displaced, and violence against civilians taking place throughout Darfur, the protection of civilians continues to be the priority of UNAMID. I am disturbed by the persistent violations and abuses of human rights committed against civilians, in particular internally displaced persons, women and children, in Darfur. Since the main source of insecurity or crime is Government forces and their affiliated militias, ending such a pattern of violence requires a wider reform process that brings accountability to armed personnel and transforms the machinery developed for counter-insurgency. I count on the commitment of the Government to prevent any acts of violence by its security personnel against civilians, and to take punitive measures for those who defy it. The rule of law must be strengthened to address acts of violence committed by armed militias and criminal groups. In this connection, I reiterate my call upon the Government to provide unhindered access to UNAMID and its humanitarian and human rights partners to reach areas of concern, including the camps for internally displaced persons and localities affected by armed clashes. Clearance granted to parts of the Jebel Marra that remained inaccessible for the past several years is a positive deployment, and I urge the Government to continue extending access, including for other parts of that region.

70. I also welcome progress made in the processing of visas and the release of food ration containers. I am however concerned about continued delays in the clearance of containers holding essential equipment and supplies for UNAMID in Port Sudan and Khartoum. I urge the Government, in line with its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement, to take urgent steps to remove all remaining restrictions on UNAMID operations, particularly those pending requests that have experienced lengthy delays.

71. The United Nations remains committed to developing the exit strategy of UNAMID, in accordance with the decisions of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Similarly, UNAMID continues its efforts for the gradual transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team on the basis of comparative advantage and complementarity. However, the continued lack of resources for the United Nations country team to expand its presence and operations in Darfur poses a significant challenge to the process of handing over mandated tasks. I count on the support of donor countries to fill gaps in critical areas, such as gender and rule of law, while UNAMID continues to work with the country team and civil society partners to ensure the sustainability of support provided through the peacekeeping mission.

72. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the former Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator, Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi, for his work in support of peace in Darfur during his one-year service at UNAMID. In the same vein, I appreciate the efforts of the Acting Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator, Jeremiah Nyamane Kingsley Mamabolo, as well as the leadership and all the personnel of UNAMID, the United Nations country team and humanitarian partners, who continue to work tirelessly towards the pursuit of sustainable peace in Darfur, often under very difficult conditions. I also commend my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, and former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Abdulsalami Abubakar of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for their steadfast commitment to sustainable peace and stability in the Sudan.



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